1. (Presently amended) A method of managing a finger assignment in a wireless communication device, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving said finger assignment from a searcher portion of said communication device;

b) determining a signal-strength for said finger assignment;

c) enabling said finger assignment for a combine operation if said signal-strength for said finger assignment satiates a first signal-strength threshold; and

d) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates a second signal-strength threshold, said second signal-strength threshold being less than said first signal-strength threshold.

2. (Original) The method recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

e) determining a time period over which said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates said second signal-strength threshold.

3. (Original) The method recited in Claim 2 further comprising the step of:

f) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said time period satiates a time threshold.

4. (Original) The method recited in Claim 2 further comprising the step of:

f) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said time threshold.

5. (Original) The method recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

e) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said second signal-strength threshold.

6. (Original) The method recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

e) demodulating said finger assignment.

7. (Original) The method recited in Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

e) filtering said signal-strength of said finger assignment as determined in step b).

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of a plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 2 further comprising the step of:

e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of a plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment and based upon said time period over which said signals strength exists.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 8 further comprising the step of:

f) evaluating said finger assignment for said combine operation or for deassignment based upon its state.

11. (Presently amended) A wireless communication device for managing a finger assignment, said communication device comprising:

a transceiver;

a processor, said processor coupled to said transceiver; and

a computer readable memory unit, said computer readable memory unit coupled to said processor, said computer readable memory unit containing program instructions stored therein that execute, via said processor, and cause the processor to perform the steps of:

a) receiving said finger assignment;

b) determining a signal-strength for said finger assignment;

c) enabling said finger assignment for a combine operation if said signal-strength for said finger assignment satiates a first signal-strength threshold; and

d) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates a second signal-strength threshold, said second signal-strength threshold being less than said first signal-strength threshold.

12. (Original) The method recited in Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

e) determining a time period over which said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates said second signal-strength threshold.

13. (Original) The method recited in Claim 12 further comprising the step of:

f) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said time period satiates a time threshold.

14. (Original) The method recited in Claim 12 further comprising the step of:

f) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said time threshold.

15. (Original) The method recited in Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

e) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said second signal-strength threshold.

16. (Original) The method recited in Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

e) demodulating said finger assignment.

17. (Original) The method recited in Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

e) filtering said signal-strength of said finger assignment as determined in step b).

18. (Original) The method of Claim 11 further comprising the step of:

e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of a plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further comprising the step of:

e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of a plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment and based upon said time period over which said signals strength exists.

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20. (Original) The method of Claim 18 further comprising the step of:

f) evaluating said finger assignment for said combine operation or for deassignment based upon its state.

21. (Presently Amended) A computer readable medium containing therein computer readable codes for causing an electronic device to implement a method of managing said multipath signals, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving said finger assignment;

b) determining a signal-strength for said finger assignment;

c) enabling said finger assignment for a combine operation if said signal-strength for said finger assignment satiates a first signal-strength threshold; and

d) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates a second signal-strength threshold, said second signal-strength threshold being less than said first signal-strength threshold.

22. (Original) The method recited in Claim 21 further comprising the step of:

e) determining a time period, using said timer, over which said signal-strength of said finger assignment satiates said second signal-strength threshold.

23. (Original) The method recited in Claim 22 further comprising the step of:

f) preventing said finger assignment from being deassigned if said time period satiates a time threshold.

24. (Original) The method recited in Claim 22 further comprising the step of:

f) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said time threshold.

25. (Original) The method recited in Claim 21 further comprising the step of:

e) allowing said finger assignment to be deassigned if said finger assignment fails to satiate said second signal-strength threshold.

26. (Original) The method recited in Claim 21 further comprising the step of:

   e) demodulating said finger assignment.

27. (Original) The method recited in Claim 21 further comprising the step of:

   3) filtering said signal-strength of said finger assignment as determined in step b).

28. (Original) The method of Claim 21 further comprising the step of:

   e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of a plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 22 further comprising the step of:

   e) categorizing said finger assignment into one of plurality of states based upon said signal-strength of said finger assignment and based upon said time period over which said signals strength exists.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 28 further comprising the step of:

   f) evaluating said finger assignment for said combine operation or for deassignment based upon its state.